

Research Method

This section of the report provides a description of the research method used to conduct the survey, including a description of the population and the sample, questionnaire design, data collection, and data analysis.

Population and Sample

The National Institute on Media and the Family (NIMF) was interested in obtaining information from parents of children aged three to seventeen nationally. Anderson-Niebuhr obtained a national list of residences with published phone numbers. From this list, Anderson-Niebuhr drew a random sample of 600 residents. As a result, every household had an equal chance of being selected to participate in the survey, and the findings can be considered representative of the population. Anderson-Niebuhr stratified the sample such that 200 respondents were parents of children between three and seven years, 200 were parents of children between eight and twelve, and 200 were parents of children between 13 and 17.

Questionnaire Design

To construct the questionnaires, Anderson-Niebuhr met with NIMF representatives to discuss the issues and topics to be addressed in the questionnaires. Using information from these meetings, Anderson-Niebuhr prepared two draft questionnaires; one addressing media attitudes, media behaviors, and demographics, the other addressing parents evaluations of the Children's Impact Statements.

The questionnaires were pretested with a random sample of 15 parents, five from each group. Anderson-Niebuhr made



recommendations for changes based on the results of the pretest to increase the reliability and validity of the items. The questionnaire was revised and finalized in consultation with NIMF representatives. Copies of the questionnaires are included in Appendix B.

Data Collection

The survey was conducted using Anderson-Niebuhr's established telephone survey methods. Data collection occurred from August 5 to October 2, 1996. Parents were contacted initially to complete the first survey. Parents were subsequently mailed a videotape that had two (of three) television shows and example Children's Impact Statements for those shows. Parents were then contacted again and completed the second survey.

Six hundred first surveys were completed; 200 were completed with parents of children between 3 and 7, 200 with parents of children between 8 and 12, and 200 with parents between 13 and 17. These sample sizes yield results accurate to $\pm 4\%$ with a 95% confidence level when generalizing to parents as a whole, and accurate to $\pm 7\%$ when generalizing to parents of specific age groups. The overall response rate for the first survey was 66 percent.

Out of the 600 parents who completed the first survey, 507 agreed to receive the videotape and be surveyed again. Four hundred and eighty-eight second surveys were completed; 167 were completed with parents of children between 3 and 7, 167 with parents of children between 8 and 12, and 154 with parents between 13 and 17. These sample sizes yield results accurate to $\pm 4\%$ with a 95% confidence level when generalizing to parents as a whole, and accurate to approximately $\pm 8\%$ when



generalizing to parents of specific age groups. The overall response rate for the second survey was 97 percent.

Videotapes

Respondents were mailed one of two videotapes. Each videotape included two television shows, and ran approximately 35 minutes. Videotape 1 included an episode of Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers (an after-school live action children's show), and an episode of 3rd Rock from the Sun (a prime-time situation comedy). Videotape 2 included an episode of Mighty Max (a Saturday morning animated cartoon), and the same episode of Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers. Copies of the cover letter and Children's Impact Statements that accompanied the videotapes are included in Appendix B.

Data

Analysis

Each completed survey was reviewed for completeness and consistency before being transferred to magnetic media for computer analysis. All transfer of data was verified. Anderson-Niebuhr defined analyses to be performed in consultation with NIMF representatives. Anderson-Niebuhr's on-site computer facilities and computer programs contained in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS/Windows) were used to conduct the analyses.



Reliability, Validity, and Useability of the Children's Impact Statement [™]

In evaluating any scientifically designed rating system, such as Children's Impact Statements [™], it is of the greatest importance to measure the *reliability, validity, and useability* of the system. This information not only determines how sound the system is, but, very importantly, how and where it can be improved. A system cannot be valid if it is not reliable. Thus, establishing reliability is the cornerstone.

Reliability

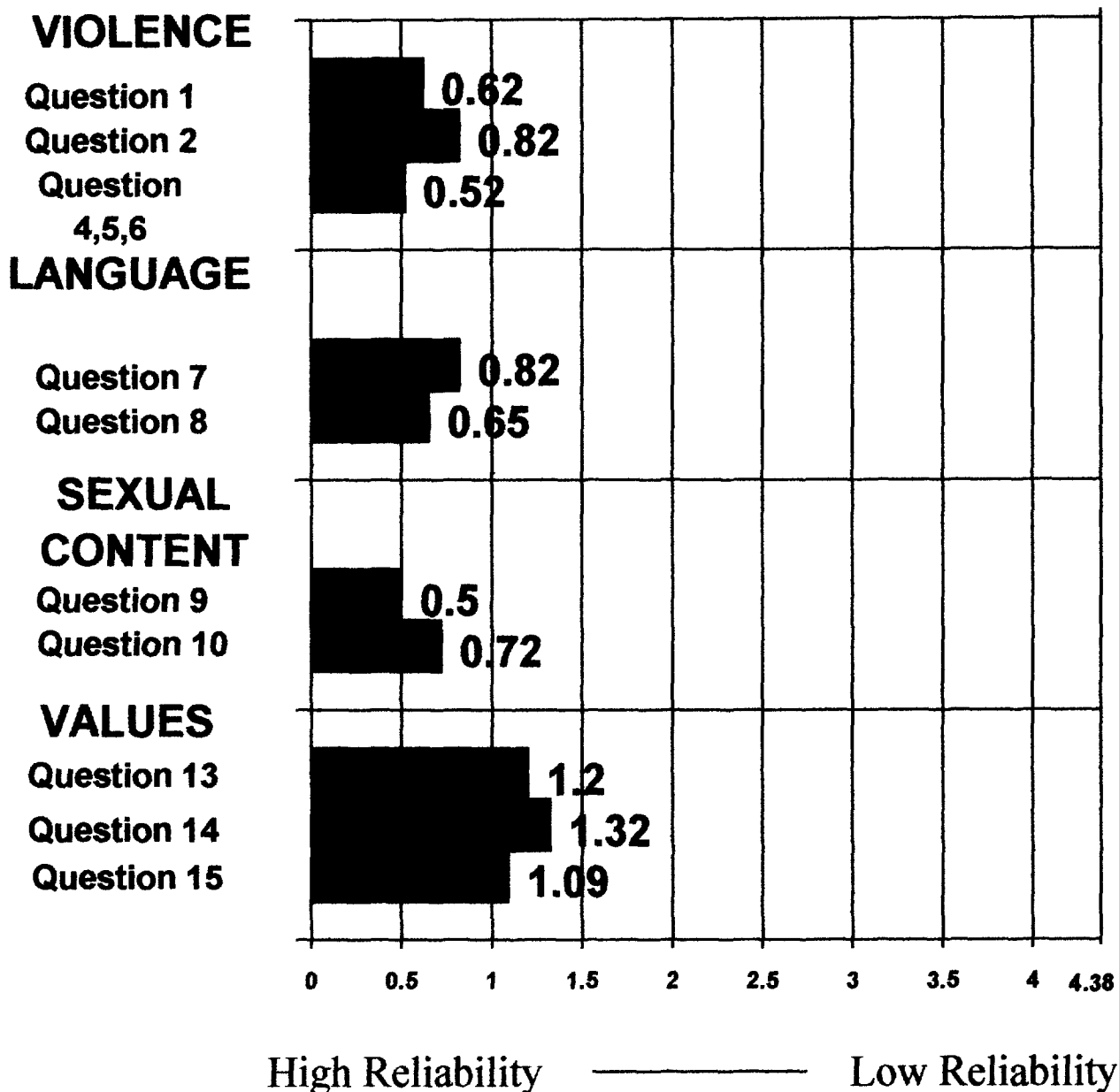
Reliability can be defined as the amount of agreement between independent measurements of the same thing. For example, we would not want to rely on a thermometer that did not yield similar results to other thermometers. With respect to Children's Impact Statements [™], we use a panel of five independent raters for each media product. All five use the same rating tool. If the five raters did not have similar ratings, we could not rely on the results.

The National Institute on Media and the Family has been testing inter-rater reliability of its protocols and making changes to increase reliability. This continually improves the accuracy of the ratings. The accompanying graph shows the results of the most recent measure of inter-rater reliability. Thirty two shows were rated by thirty two different panels of five raters each. Therefore, there were 160 different raters. The standard deviation was chosen as the measure of variance among the raters' answers. The standard deviation for all 32 shows were averaged to yield the average measure of agreement. A score of 0.00 would mean perfect agreement among all 160 raters across 32 shows. A score of 4.38 would be an indication of extreme disagreement. The closer the score is to 0.00 the more reliable that measure is.

Children's Impact Statements

Inter-Rater Reliability

(n = 160 raters)



Validity

Validity can be defined as whether something measures what it is supposed to measure. The National Institute on Media and the Family measured the validity of Children's Impact Statements™ with a national sample of parents who volunteered to watch specific television shows and evaluate the Children's Impact Statements™ that accompanied those shows.

As the accompanying graphs show, the over-whelming majority of the 488 parents thought the Children's Impact Statements™ ratings were accurate measure of the shows they reviewed.

<u>Section of</u>	<u>Percentage of Parents Who Thought Children's Impact Statement™ was Valid</u>
Violence	87%
Language	89%
Sexual Content	94%
Character Traits	85%
Summaries	89%

Whether Parents Agree With the Violence Evaluation Section of Children's Impact Statements

(N = 488)

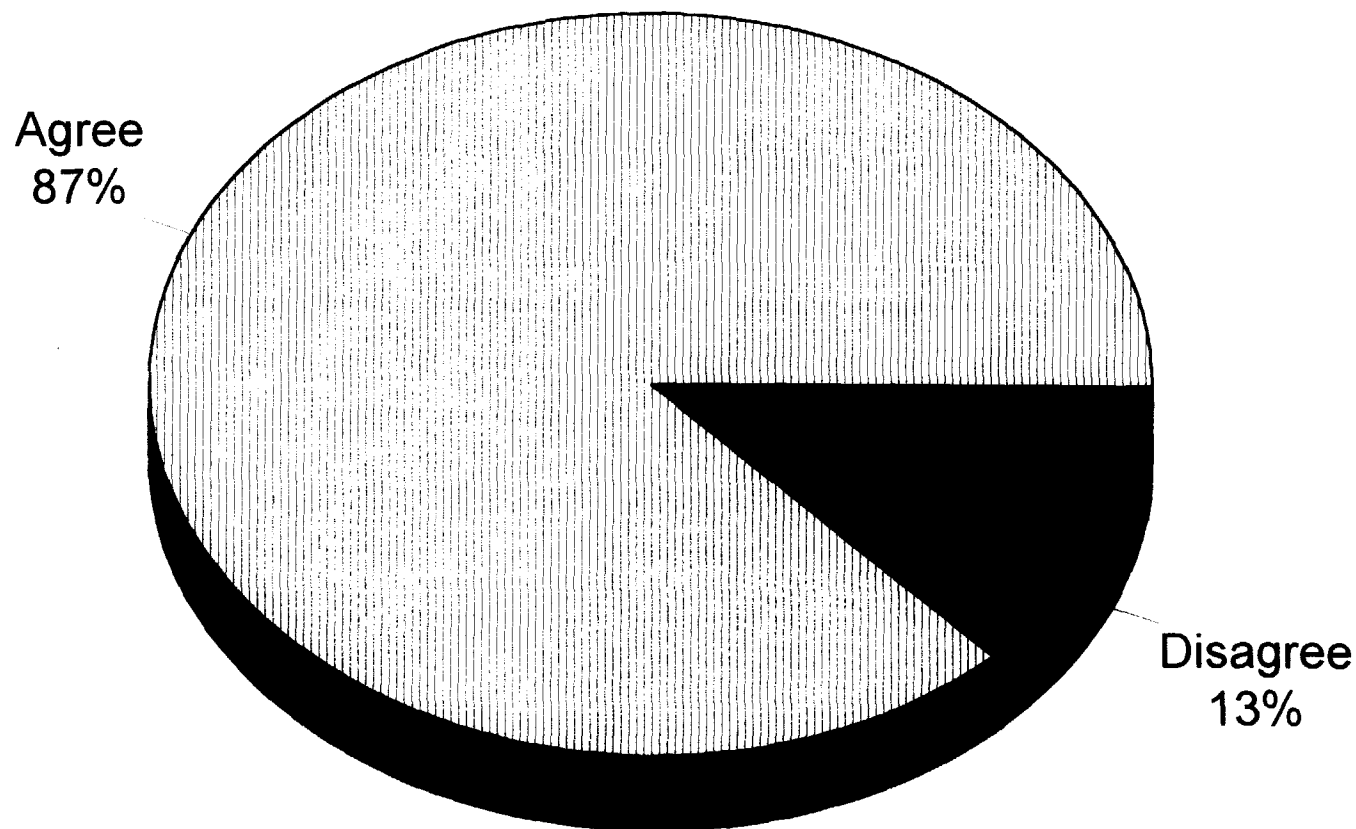


FIGURE 32

Whether Parents Agree With the Language Evaluation Section of Children's Impact Statements

(N = 488)

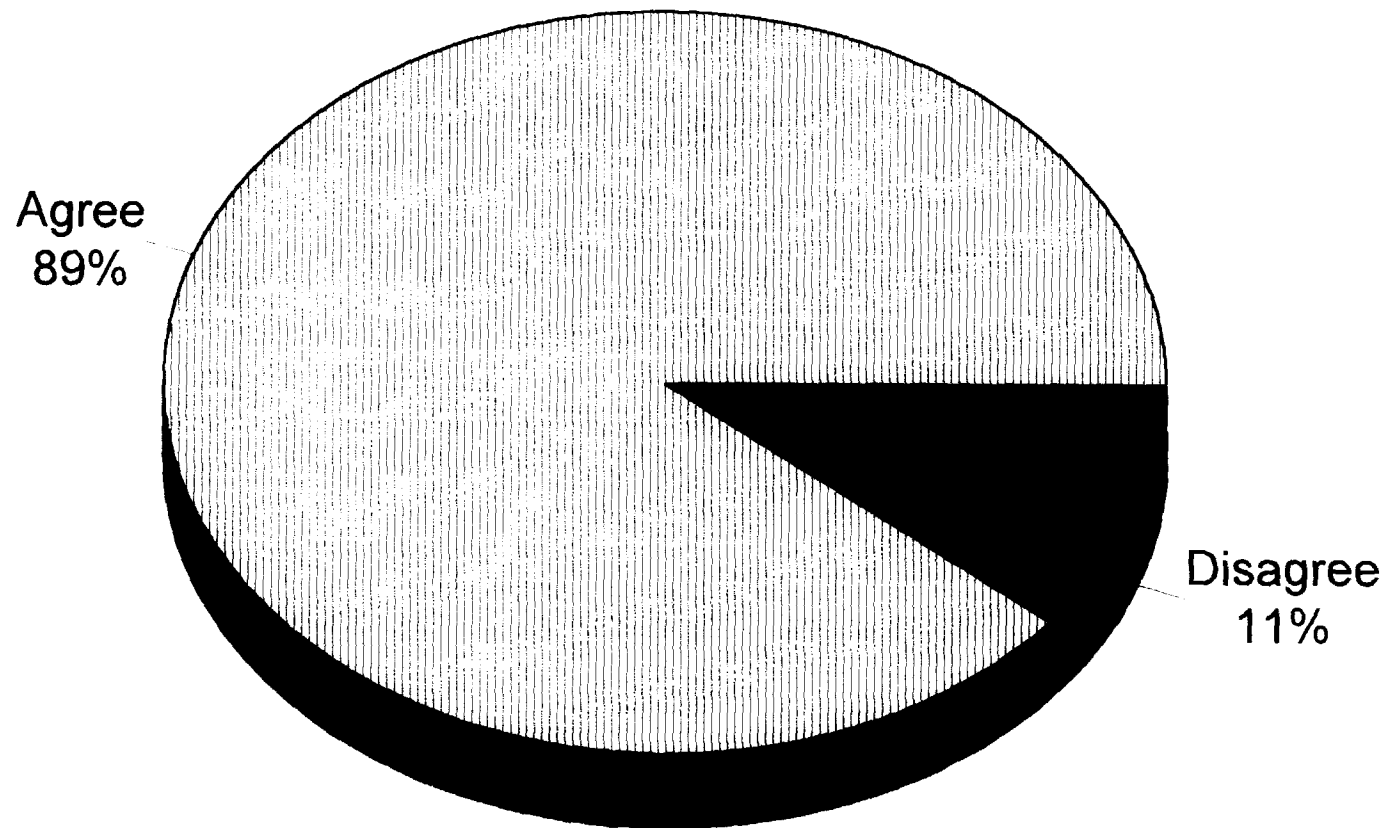


FIGURE 34

Whether Parents Agree With the Sexual Content Evaluation Section of Children's Impact Statements

(N = 488)

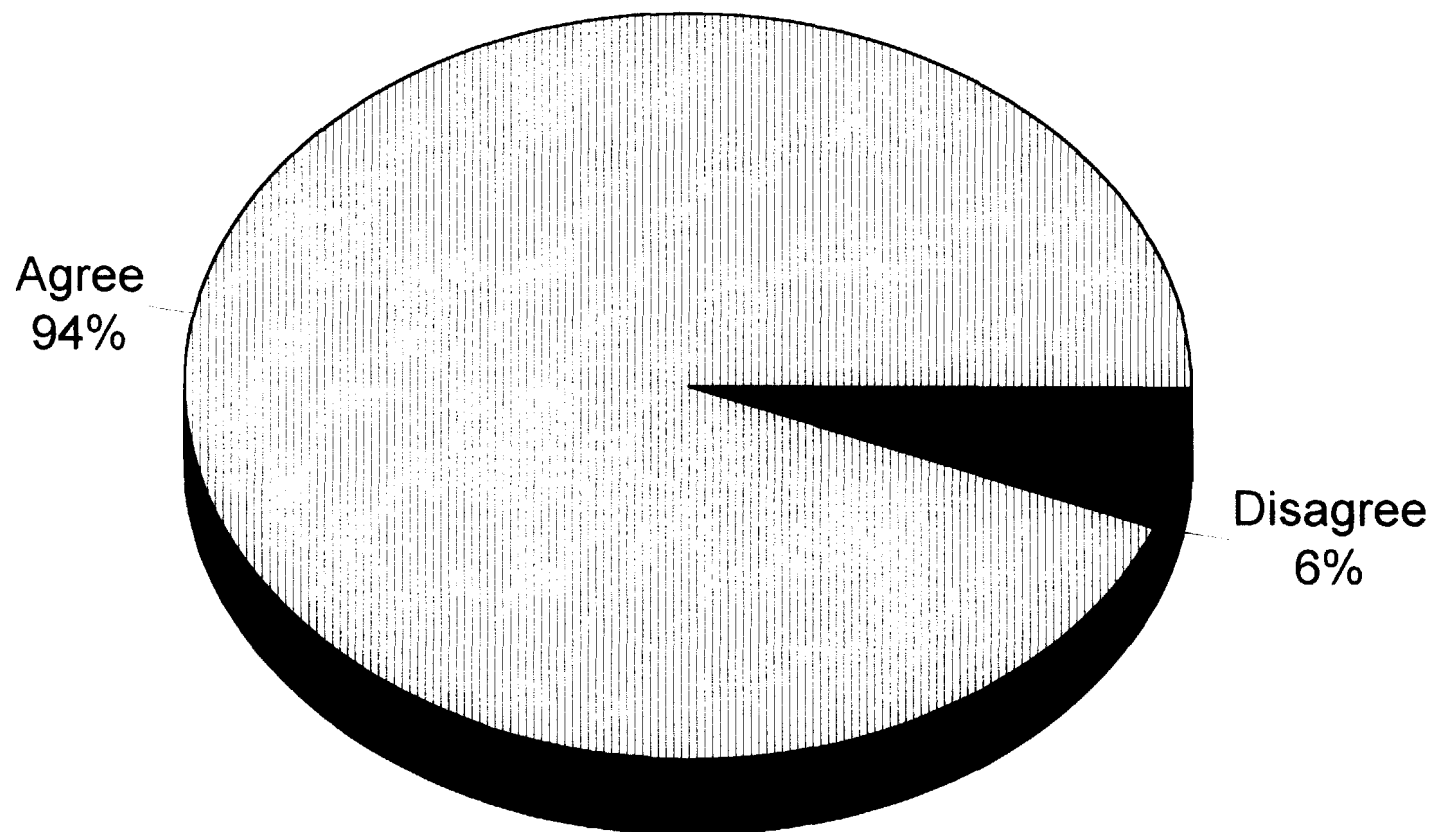


FIGURE 36

Whether Parents Agree With the Character Trait Evaluation Section of Children's Impact Statements

(N = 488)

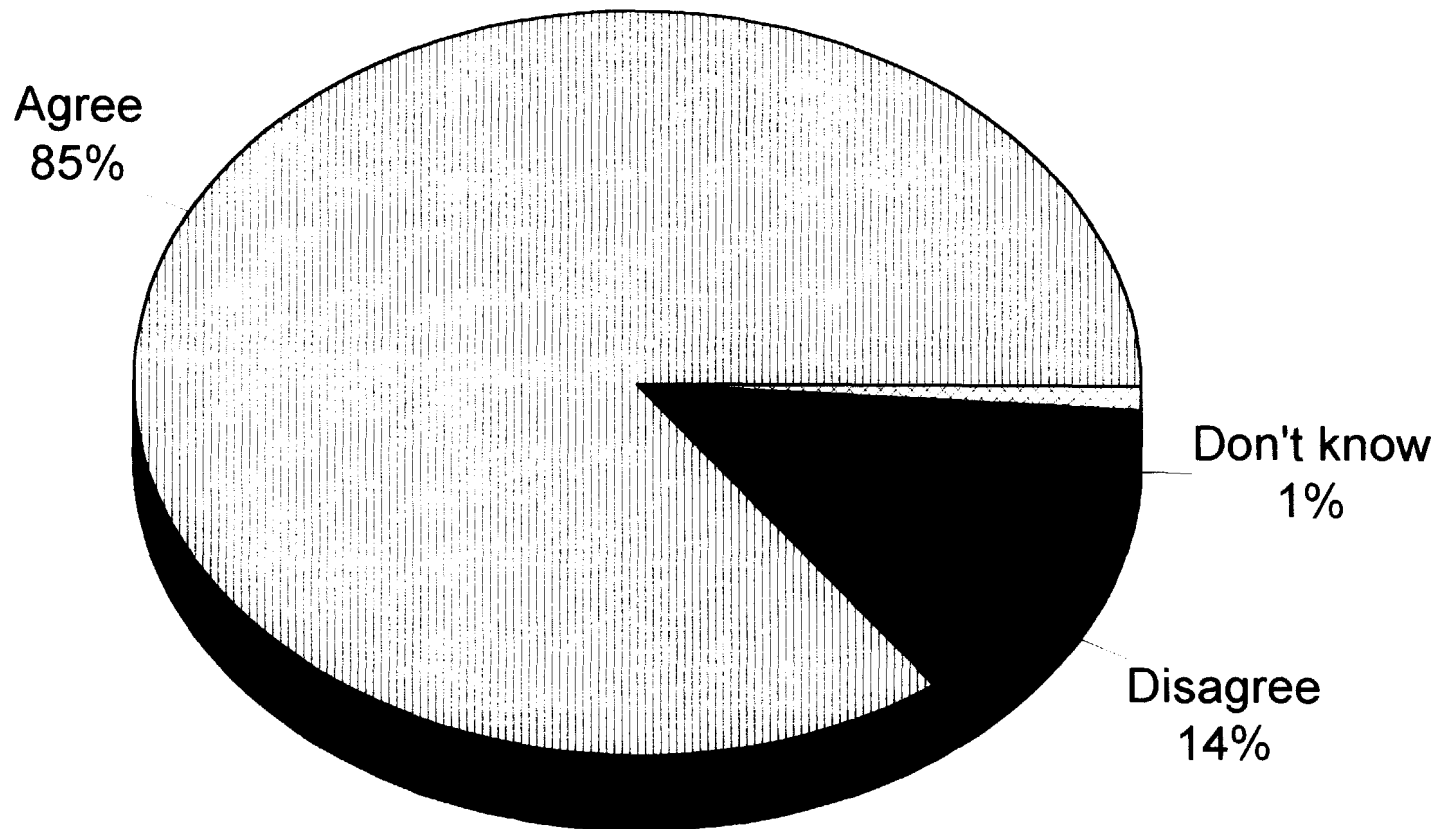


FIGURE 38

Whether Parents Agree With the Children's Impact Statements' Show Summaries

(N = 488)

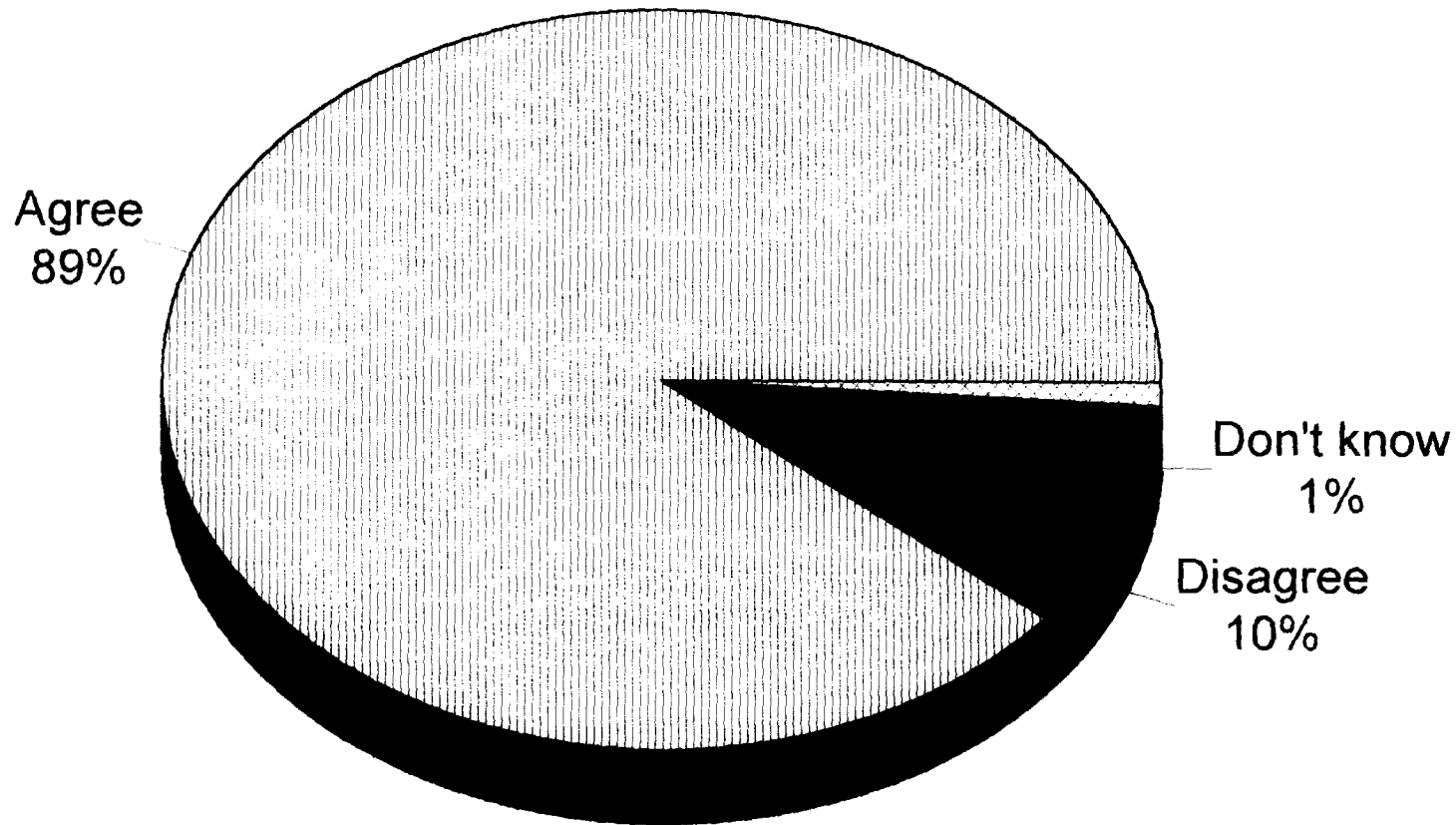


FIGURE 40

Useability

Useability Even a valid and reliable rating system will not help parents if it is not useful. The National Institute on Media and the Family surveyed parents nationally to ascertain if the Children's Impact Statements™ were useable. The accompanying graphs show the following.

88% said the ratings were easy to understand

81% said they were more helpful than movie ratings

94% said they were likely to use them if available

93% said they would raise level of awareness of media's impact

Whether Parents Think the Children's Impact Statements Will Raise the Level of Awareness of Media's Impact on Children

(N = 488)

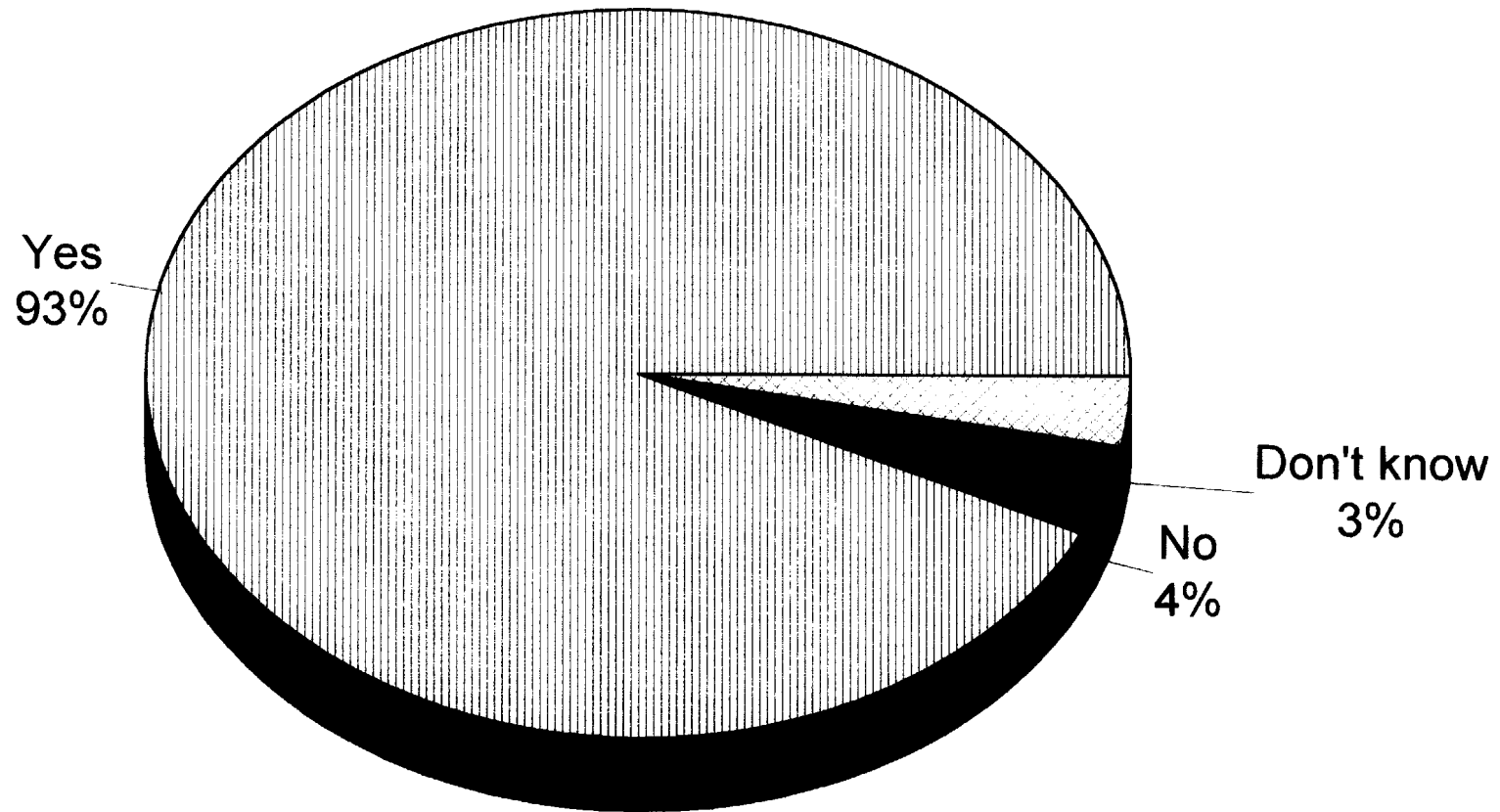


FIGURE 51

Whether Parents Would Use the Children's Impact Statements If Made Available to Them

(N = 488)

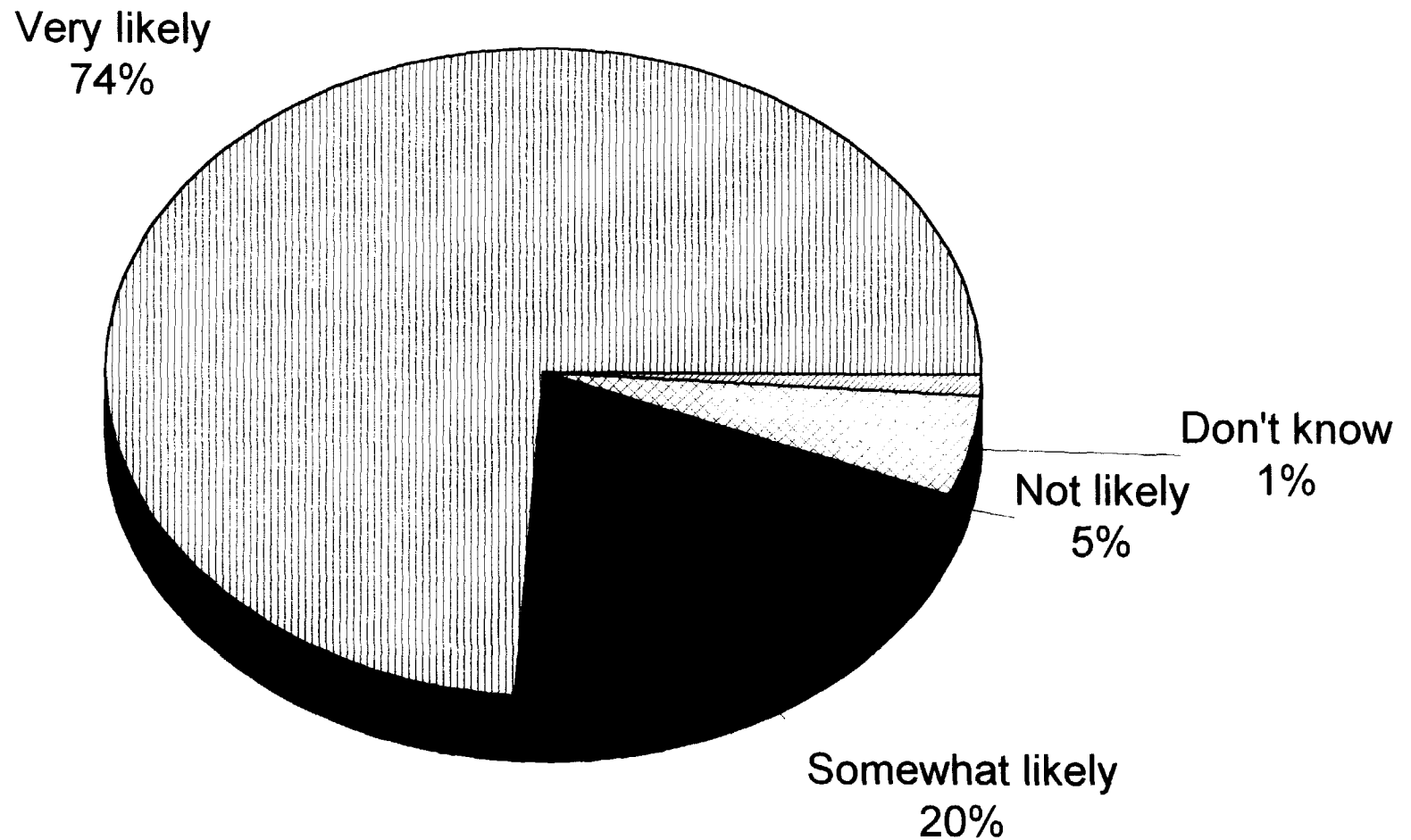


FIGURE 46

Parents' *a priori* Interest in Children's Impact Statements

Q: How interested would you be to be able to see a detailed evaluation of media, such as for movies and television shows, that provided...information...in an easy-to-understand format, plus a recommendation of how appropriate the media are for children of different ages?

(N = 600)

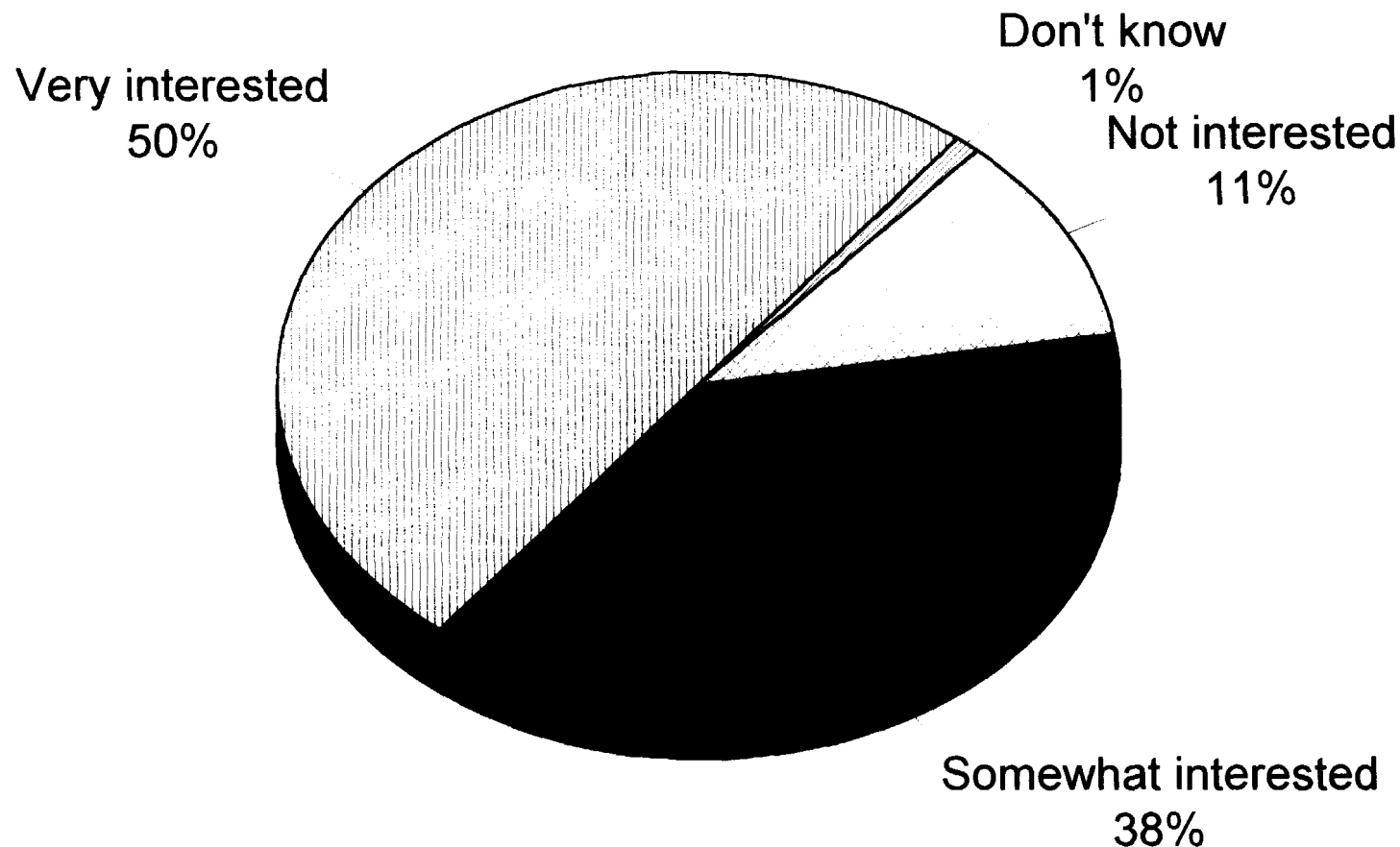


FIGURE 24

Whether Children's Impact Statements Are More Helpful, Less Helpful, or About the Same as Current Rating Systems

(N = 488)

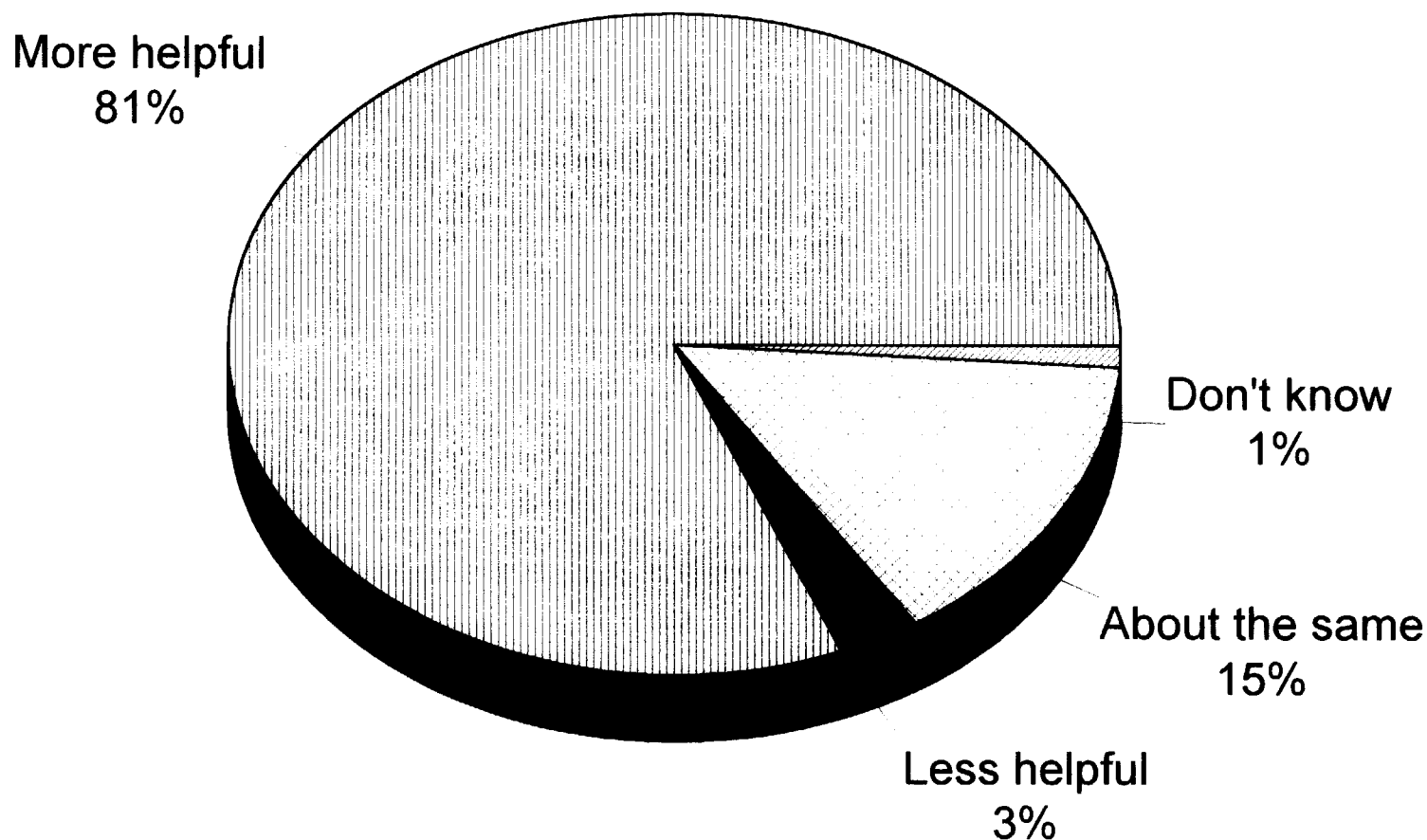


FIGURE 28

Whether the Children's Impact Statements Are Easy to Understand

(N = 488)

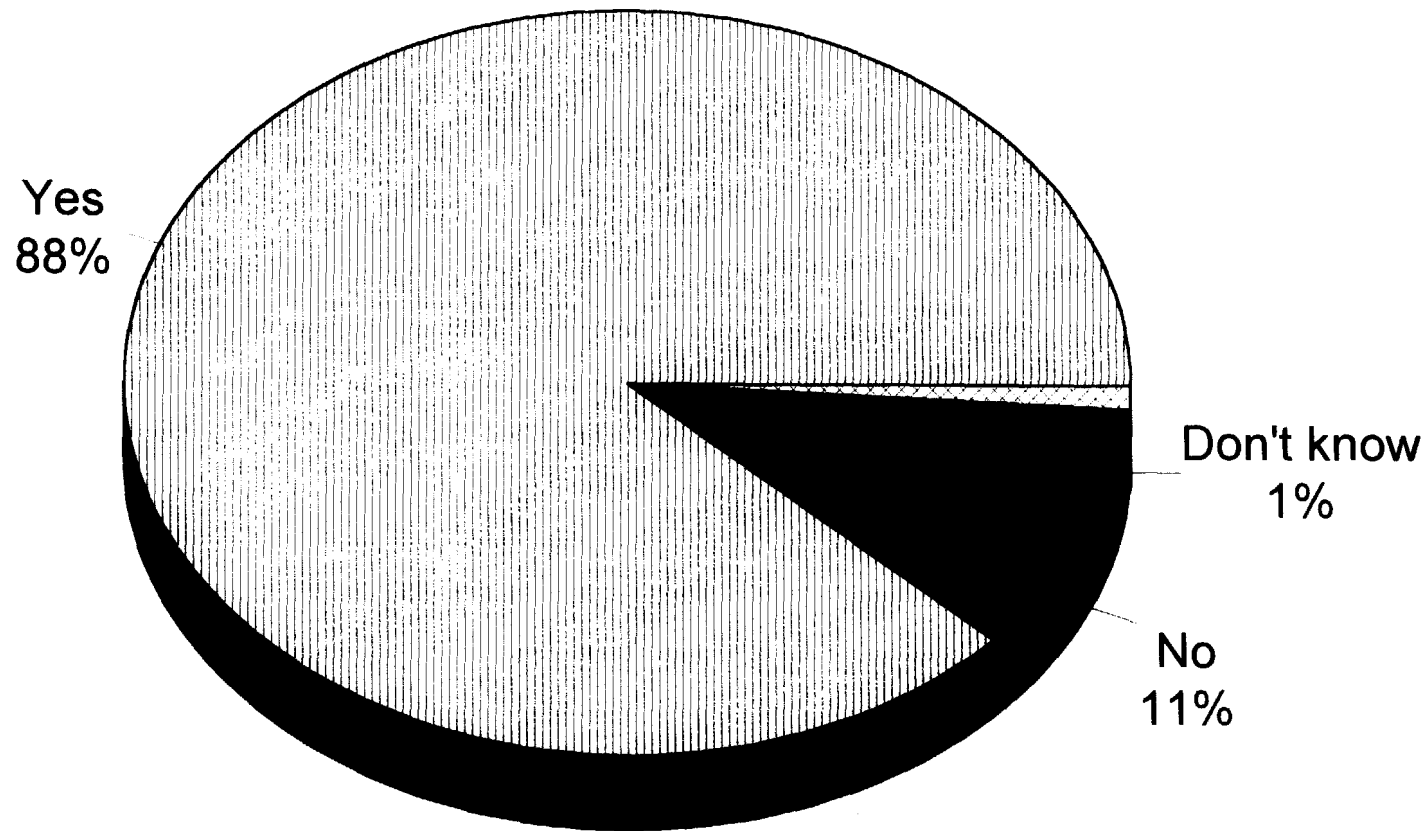


FIGURE 26

Whether Parents Think Any of the Children's Impact Statement Categories Are Unimportant

(N = 488)

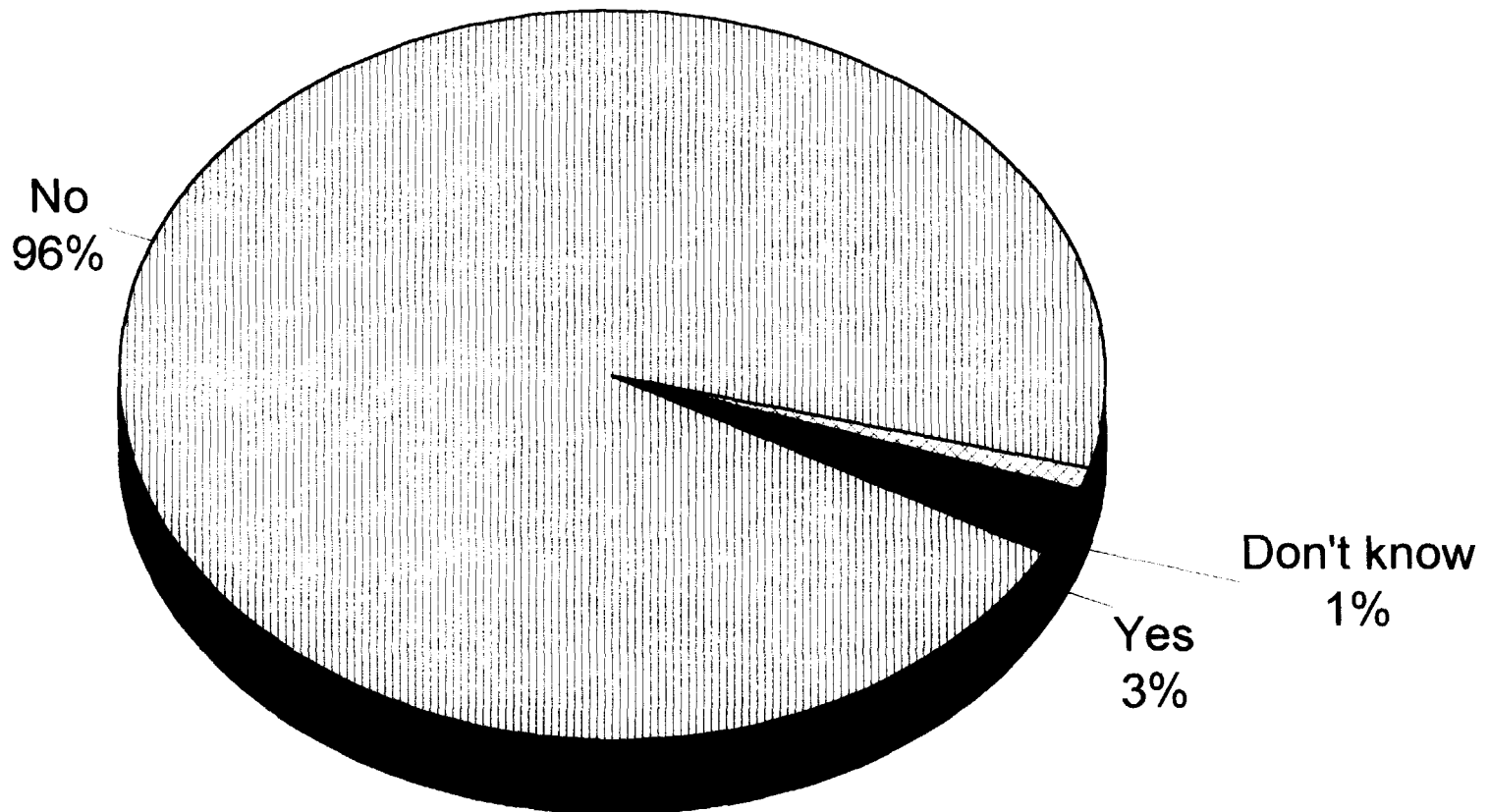


FIGURE 42

RX FOR Media Violence?

Doctor Forms Institute to Monitor Media's Impact on Kids

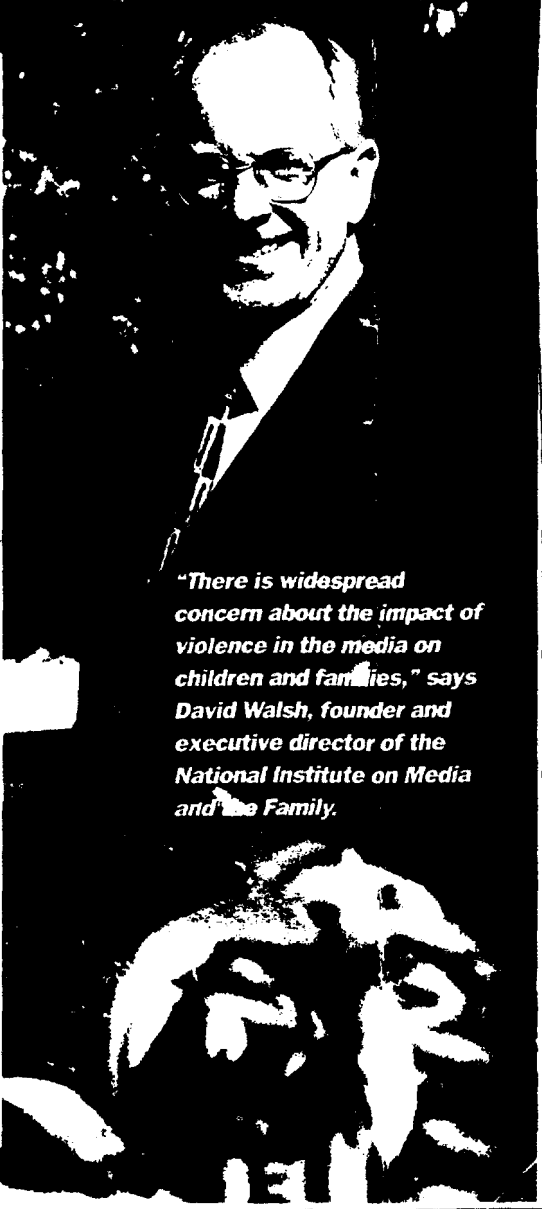
FRONT PAGE

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Media managers and advertising executives should keep an eye on Minneapolis psychologist David Walsh. Because, in all likelihood, Walsh is keeping an eye on them.

Recently Walsh formed the National Institute on Media and the Family, which will rate media products and provide information about how these products affect kids. The Minneapolis-based Institute will evaluate TV programs, movies, video cassettes and games, ads, Internet sites, CD-ROMs and more.

(continued on page 29)



"There is widespread concern about the impact of violence in the media on children and families," says David Walsh, founder and executive director of the National Institute on Media and the Family.

Rx for Media Violence?



Institute logo design by Dean Flory

(continued from page 1)

Walsh, an 18-year psychologist with Fairview Health System, is nationally known for his expertise on media and the mind. And he has high expectations that his new institute can help curb violence, which he calls "the greatest domestic issue for families in the United States today."

According to Walsh, "...we hope to improve the transmission of positive values to our children, to change the culture of violence that exists today and to enhance the quality of life for all people in our country."

These lofty goals will be achieved, he hopes, primarily through the distribution of "Children's Impact Statements," a rating system designed to evaluate media products, devised by institute experts. The statements will be distributed via a subscription newsletter, a telephone dial-in service and a Web site (www.mediaandthefamily.org).

The institute will also issue media buying guides for advertisers; consult with companies regarding advertising policies; conduct an annual awards program; and provide continuing public information and education.

But above all, "Our primary purpose is to provide information about the impact of the media on children and families," Walsh says. "We also hope our work will help raise the standard of television programming, movie-making, electronic game production, advertising and the creation of other media products."

Walsh elaborates:

What is the National Institute on Media and the Family?

"A national resource for research, information and education about the impact of the media on children and families. It was created to provide information to parents and other adults about media products and their likely impact on children so they can make appropriate choices."

What kinds of evaluations will you do?

"We plan to evaluate the full range of media products—from television to movies, advertisements, videos, video and computer games, interactive programs and Internet sites—in terms of their likely impact on children. We have established a criteria-based system for evaluating media with regard to violence, sexual content and how they promote the six core values of respect, responsibility, citizenship, trustworthiness, fairness and caring. These evaluations will be issued in the form of Children's Impact Statements. ..."

How will you eliminate bias from your ratings?

"We have spent a year developing the criteria-based evaluation tools. The tool that the evaluators will use is now in its sixth edition; all the changes are the result of input from



David Walsh with his kids. According to Walsh, "(The Institute's) primary purpose is to provide information about the impact of the media on children and families. We also hope our work will help raise the standard of television programming, movie-making, electronic game production, advertising and the creation of other media products."

experts and parents from all over the country. We have subjected the evaluation tool to a validation process involving hundreds of parents from around the country. Each media product will be evaluated by a panel of five independent evaluators."

Why did you start the institute?

"While widespread concern about violence exists, and consensus has been reached that violence in the media is a major public health concern, very little has been done about it in a far-reaching way. It is well-documented that there is a direct link between violence in the media and violence in our streets. Initially, The National Institute on Media and the Family was created to find solutions to these problems. By addressing violence in the media as a major national public health crisis, we intend to cause fundamental social change. As our vision for the institute's work has both expanded and been refined ... we have concluded that the institute must be devoted to studying the full impact of the media on children and the family. This study will include not only the portrayal of violence, but also how the media portrays and teaches language, sexuality, character traits and values. We believe that we must forge a link between the solutions to our social problems and the solutions to our health care problems."

Couldn't your work be seen as censorship?

"The institute does not endorse censorship of any kind. We fully support the Bill of Rights and honor the important freedom bestowed on us with the First Amendment. The institute seeks to educate, and inform, and to provide parents and other caregivers with the information they need to make appropriate choices for their children. We believe that the entertainment and advertising industries can maintain profits and creative freedom while consciously working to reduce the promotion of senseless violence and irresponsible and dangerous sex."

(continued)

Rx for Media Violence?



(continued from page 29)

Do you honestly think you can influence what kind of television—or any other—programming that gets produced?


"We hope to raise the standard of television programming, as well as that of movie making, electronic game production and the creation of other media products—but only indirectly. We believe that when parents and other caregivers have information they need to make informed choices, their choices will pressure the entertainment and advertising industries to rethink the kind of programming they are producing. Public outrage about Calvin Klein's ads last year is an excellent example of the energy that can fuel change in the advertising business."

Didn't TV and entertainment industry heads announce they were going to develop a rating system for television?

"Yes, and that is a step in the right direction. However, there are several problems with that concept. The agreement calls for the networks to rate their own material. This is the same methodology that video game producers agreed to a couple of years ago. They rate their own products! ... Another problem with the proposed network-funded rating system is that it is linked to the V-chip, which was included in the communications bill passed earlier this year. V-chips will only be installed in new televisions sold after a certain date. Existing sets will probably not be retrofitted. ... The majority of Americans will not be able to use the technology for years to come."

How do you expect the media to respond to the Institute?

"I'll respond by telling you how I hope the media will respond. Since the media, along with the family, are primary transmitters of values, we must work together to assure that the values that the media transmits are consistent with the values we hold as parents, caregivers and grandparents. As the world's most powerful teachers, the media now have an opportunity to teach positive values while they entertain and educate children. The entertainment industry could take a leadership role in shaping our children's values in a positive way."

"We believe that when parents and other caregivers have information they need to make informed choices, their choices will pressure the entertainment and advertising industries to rethink the kind of programming they are producing. Public outrage about Calvin Klein's ads last year is an excellent example of the energy that can fuel change in the advertising business." —David Walsh 

Children's Impact Statement

Product: _____
 Type: _____
 Industry Rating: _____
 Synopsis: _____

The Evaluation

Appropriateness: _____
 Ages 3-7: _____
 Ages 8-12: _____
 Ages 13-17: _____

Violence: _____
 Amount: _____
 Graphic: _____
 Characterized: _____


Language: _____
 Vulgar: _____
 Sexually Explicit: _____

Sexual Content: _____
 Nudity: _____
 Explicit: _____

Character Traits: _____
 Responsible: _____
 Caring: _____

Summary: This shows many sexual overtones and some violence. The sexual content and use of making one another's comments which makes this show inappropriate for children of any age.

What do you expect as long-term results from the Institute?

"Studies have shown, and we believe, that by reducing violence in the media, we can reduce violence in our homes, our workplaces and our streets. The work of this organization will not only reduce the epidemic of violence in this country, it will, over the long term, reduce health care costs, build healthier families, and build healthier communities." 

The Board

David Walsh was formerly executive director of Clinics and Systems Operations for Fairview Behavioral Services. He serves as executive director of the new

Institute. Fairview is a founding sponsor of the Institute.

The founding board of directors for the organization includes: Ann Barkelew, GM of the Minneapolis office of Fleishman-Hillard; Martha Farrell Erickson, director of the Children, Youth and Family Consortium at the University of Minnesota; Marjorie Hogan, national spokesperson for the American Academy of Pediatrics; Bob Keeshan, best known as TV's "Captain Kangaroo"; Mark Lloyd, communications attorney with the law firm Dow, Lohnes & Albertson; Richard Norling, president and CEO of Fairview Health System, Minneapolis; M. Roy Schwarz, former VP of the American Medical Assoc.; Ken Wales, filmmaker; and Walsh.

Do you, as a media or advertising professional, have an opinion about David Walsh's National Institute on Media and the Family? Share your views, for possible publication in FORMAT. Send comments to: Editor, FORMAT, P.O. Box 29488, Minneapolis, MN 55429. Or send e-mail to format2@aol.com.

Star Tribune

NEWSPAPER OF THE TWIN CITIES

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50¢

Institute formed to monitor effects of media on children

By Tatsha Robertson
Star Tribune Staff Writer

Hoping to take a lead role in issues of how the media affect children, a Twin Cities psychologist has announced formation of a national resource institute.

David Walsh, a psychologist for Fairview Health System for 18 years, has been named executive director of the new National Institute on Media and the Family in Minneapolis.

During a news conference Tuesday, officials also presented the institute's new national rating system, designed to help parents monitor what their children see on TV, in video games or on the Internet, said Walsh.

The media have "an increasingly

large influence on the attitude and values and behaviors of children," he said. "We need to do what we can to maximize the benefits and minimize the harm."

The institute is based at the Fairview Health System on the grounds of Fairview Riverside Medical Center. The Fairview Health system will also sponsor the institute.

Turn to MEDIA on A10 for:

— For one year experts consulted with parents on questions used to evaluate individual shows.

Also on A10:

— How the institute rates the movie "Phenomenon."

How do you rate?

The National Institute on Media and the Family rates TV shows, movies, video games, even the Internet with a system that grades each element for five categories. This is an actual example of how the institute rated the movie "Phenomenon."

Children's Impact Statement

Product Type: Phenomenon
Industry Rating: PG

Synopsis:
A man gains superior intelligence and magic powers when zapped by a ball of light.

The Evaluation:

Appropriateness	PROCEED	CAUTION	STOP
Ages 3-7			
Ages 8-12			
Ages 13-17			
Violence			
Amount			
Graphic			
Glamorized			
Language			
Vulgar			
Sexually Explicit			
Sexual Content			

MEDIA from A1

Rating system designed to help parents monitor what kids see

Backed by executives from the hospital, members of the movie and TV industries and top medical officials, Walsh said the idea for such an institute began after he kept hearing parents' concerns about the impact that violence in the media has on their children. Parents also complained that one-letter rating systems didn't provide enough information for them to make good choices, he said.

The institute also released the findings of a study in which 70 percent of parents reported that their children imitate characters from TV and 65 percent say their children imitate characters from movies. The study also said 74 percent of the parents are frustrated by the limited warnings displayed on TV.

For one year, Walsh said, a team of public health and education experts consulted with parents to create a list of questions to evaluate individual shows.

He said this rating system is not meant to compete against recent efforts by Hollywood, but to complement such efforts. However, he said "we are hoping to be the gold standard."

In March, representatives of the major TV networks, cable and production companies met with President Clinton and pledged to produce a voluntary rating system. Their efforts, combined with V-chips, electronic devices that in the future will allow parents to block undesirable shows, were praised by Clinton but criticized by others because the networks will rate themselves.

Walsh echoed some of the same criticism: "We are totally independent and nonpartisan," he said.

He also said V-chips will only be installed in new television sets.

Ken Wales, a board member of the new institute and producer of the CBS television show "Christy," said the new rating system will add honesty and truth to the present system. He said too many parents are being misled to believe that their children are seeing nonviolent shows.

The institute's rating system will evaluate a variety of media including TV, advertisements, videos, movies, computer games, interactive programs and Internet sites. Institute officials said that media products most popular with children will be rated. Already, 11 programs — ranging from the TV show "Friends" to the video game "Contra" — have been rated.

The rating system, called "the children's impact statement" will use bright traffic symbols to rate violence and sexual content, as well as how each presentation promotes respect, responsibility, citizenship, trustworthiness, fairness and caring.

Walsh said the rating system will be distributed through a paid newsletter, its World Wide Web site (mediaandthefamily.org), news releases and a telephone service. The institute hopes to work with media organizations eventually, said Walsh.

The institute also announced its nine founding board of directors, including a variety of national figures, such as Bob Keeshan, better known as TV's Captain Kangaroo, and M. Roy Schwarz, a former vice president of the American Medical Association.

For more information about the institute, call 672-7437.